

BOOK REVIEW

Wild Flowers of the Alleghanies¹

This book, a flora of the Alleghanies from Alabama to Canada, is written for plant lovers and naturalists who are not trained botanists. Attractively bound and illustrated it is a pleasure to glance through the book or dip in it at random to read the charmingly written accounts of the uses to which various plants have been put or the stories connected with them. The book describes some 1500 species of plants. Many of them are illustrated by line drawings by F. S. Matthews and there are eight colored plates. There is a key to families written by Dr. Karl Wiegand, also a key to the genera of compositae and one to the species of bedstraw (*Galium*). The lack of keys to the genera of other families, and to species of the larger genera is a rather serious defect. The scientific names used are made secondary in importance to the common ones. Gray's manual is followed in most cases as to names, but no synonyms are given. There is an illustrated key to families, with descriptions of all the families treated in the book, each illustrated by a series of drawings showing details of the structure of some flower of the family. The separate drawings are lettered, but no explanation is given of what the letters refer to, it being left to the reader to interpret, which is not difficult in most cases. Such families as the grasses, sedges, willows and oaks are omitted, probably as being too difficult for or as lacking in interest to the users of the book. Unfortunately there are frequent slight inaccuracies, such as describing the leaves of the lesser duckweed (*Lemna minor*) as being about half an inch in diameter, or stating that the flowers of the cactus grow from the side leaf, or referring to the joints of the pods of the tick trefoil as achenes. Errors such as these may be due to careless proof reading or to carelessness in writing but they are not serious enough to prevent the book being very useful to the flower lover. The author, a pharmacist, describes the book as a labor of love. The way in which it is written shows his appreciation of beauty of form, color and adaptation to function. The descriptions are in many cases from

¹ Wild Flowers of the Alleghanies—Joseph E. Harned. xxxi + 670 pages. Published by the author, Okland, Md. 1931.

his own observation in the field. The book should not only make it possible to become acquainted with most of the wild flowers of the region, but should lead to the greater appreciation of the plants and should ripen the acquaintance into friendship.

GEORGE T. HASTINGS

How plants get their names¹

In this book Dr. Bailey discusses the rules governing the giving of the scientific names of plants, giving numerous examples of individual plants and the changes their names have undergone. Common names he dismisses with a brief reference to their interest in language study and suggestions as to how their origin and use may be studied.

A chapter is devoted to Linnaeus as the founder of the modern system of nomenclature. Another chapter is taken to explain the importance of exact determination of species, the use of herbarium specimens for comparison, and the making of herbarium specimens. The development of rules of nomenclature is explained, beginning with the Paris Botanical Congress of 1867 and coming down to the Cambridge Congress of 1930. The International and American Codes are compared but the relative merits of the two are said to be "naturally technical and of little interest to the general inquirer." For cultivated plants he stresses the advantages of class binomials to cover groups where so much hybridizing has occurred that the forms can not be referred to any original species. Attention is also given to the pronunciation of scientific names.

Systematic botany is still as important as any division of the subject, as careful identification and segregation of species and varieties is basic to studies in morphology, physiology, ecology, heredity and distribution. The investigation of cultivated plants to determine origins and identities is also an important field of study.

The last seventy pages of the book are taken up with two lists, one of genera likely to be met in horticultural literature with the pronunciations, the other of specific names with their meanings.

¹ How Plants Get their Names, L. H. Bailey. The Macmillan Co. 1933. vi-209 pages. \$2.25.